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STUMPTOWN™

GREG RUCKA • JUSTIN GREENWOOD • RYAN HILL

The Case of a Cup of Joe: Part Three

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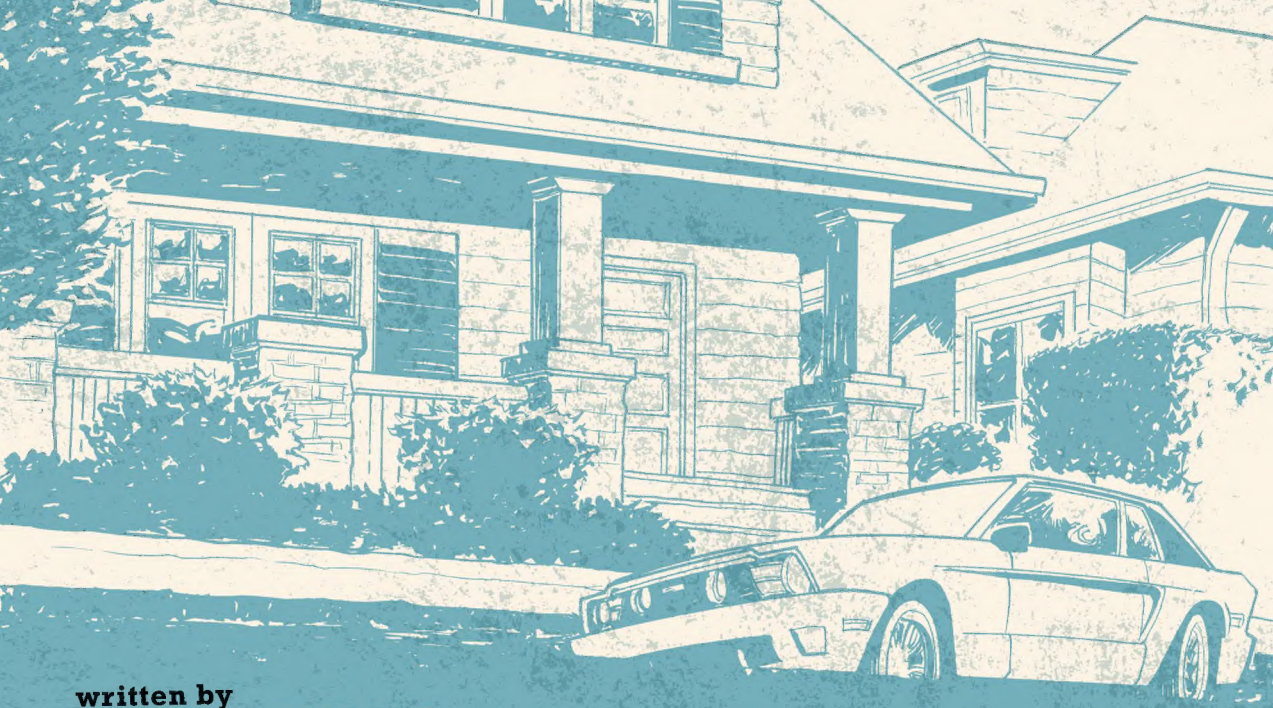

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STUMPTOWN™

The Case of a Cup of Joe • Issue Three

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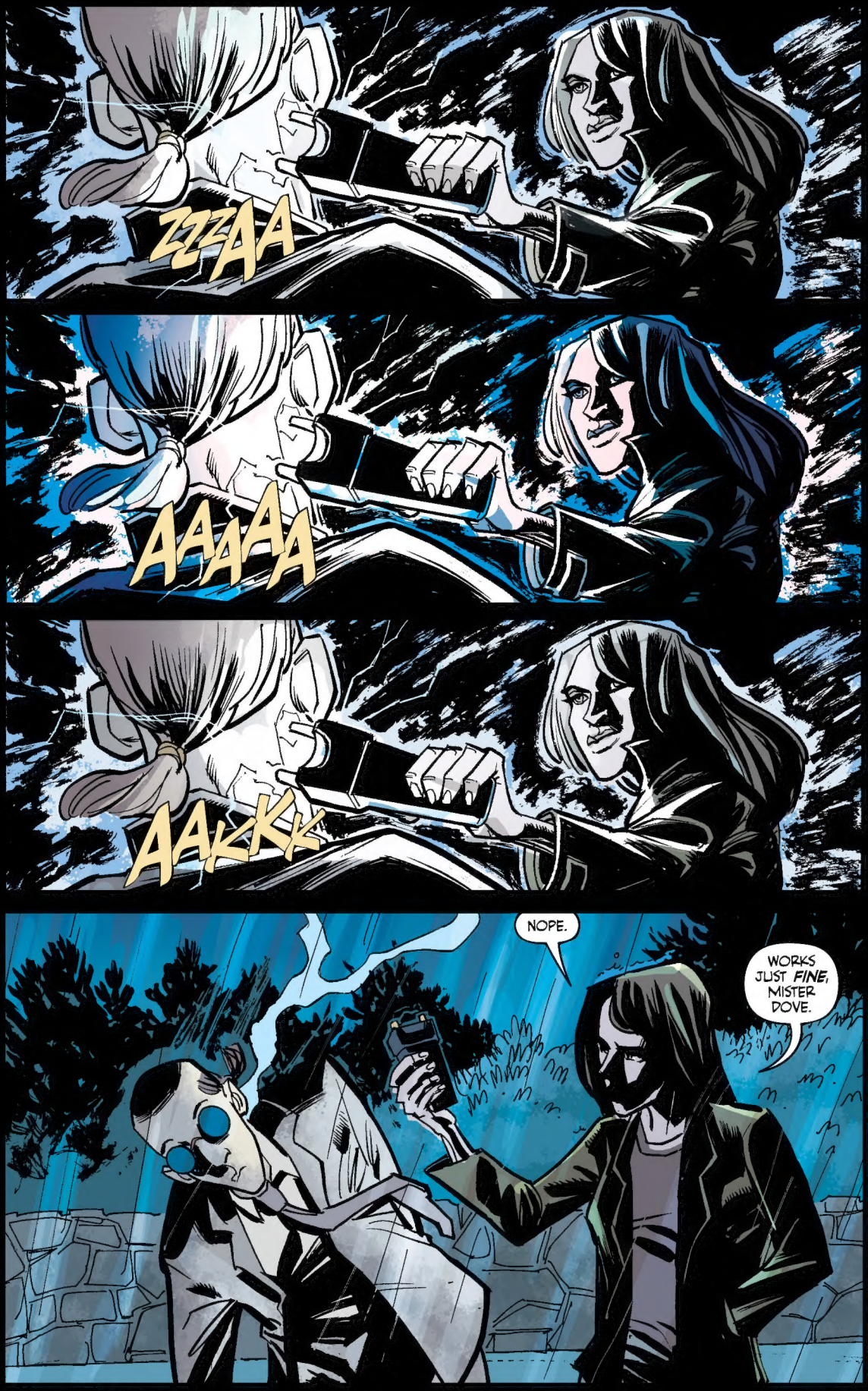
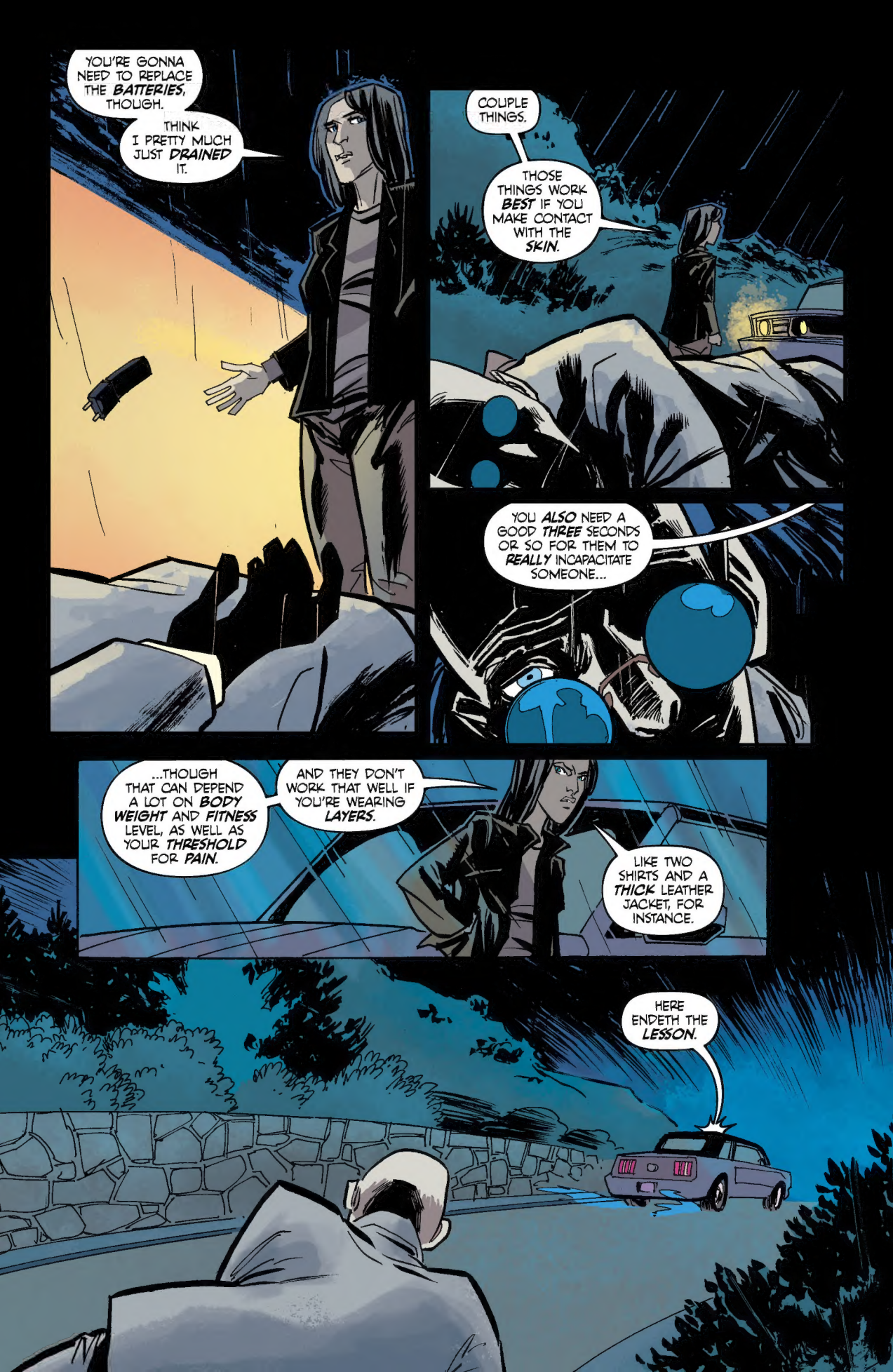
JERKS.
I MEAN, SERIOUSLY...
...ALL THIS FOR A BUNCH OF BEANS?
BARISTA MAFIA BULLSHIT...
...LIKE I'M JACK-AND-THE-GODDAMN-BEANSTALK--
--SHIT!

JESUS CHRIST, DOVE!
WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?! YOU WANT TO BE WEARING GRILL MARKS ON THAT NICE WHITE SUIT OF YOURS?
I TOLD YOU AND I TOLD LAIDLAW IT WAS NO GO!
THEY'RE FUCKING COFFEE BEANS--
--WHY DOESN'T ANYBODY TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER?!
I SWEAR TO GOD THIS TOWN--

ZZZAAKKK
ZZZAAKKK
ZZAKK
ZKK
HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE THERE, MISTER DOVE?
IT APPEARS TO BE MALFUNCTIONING.
HERE...
...LET ME SEE.


ZZZAA
AAAAA
AAKKK
NOPE.
WORKS JUST *FINE*, MISTER DOVE.


YOU'RE GONNA NEED TO REPLACE THE BATTERIES, THOUGH.
I THINK I PRETTY MUCH JUST DRAINED IT.
COUPLE THINGS.
THOSE THINGS WORK BEST IF YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SKIN.
YOU ALSO NEED A GOOD THREE SECONDS OR SO FOR THEM TO REALLY INCAPACITATE SOMEONE...
...THOUGH THAT CAN DEPEND A LOT ON BODY WEIGHT AND FITNESS LEVEL, AS WELL AS YOUR THRESHOLD FOR PAIN.
AND THEY DON'T WORK THAT WELL IF YOU'RE WEARING LAYERS.
LIKE TWO SHIRTS AND A THICK LEATHER JACKET, FOR INSTANCE.
HERE ENDETH THE LESSON.

DEX!
I WAS STARTING TO GET WORRIED!
YOU RUN INTO TROUBLE?
NO...
...I MANAGED TO HIT MY BRAKES IN TIME.
OH DEAR.
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?
MUTT AND JEFF OF THE QUOTE-BARISTA MAFIA-UNQUOTE TRIED TO JACK ME AGAIN!

AND MISTER DOVE TRIED TO AMBUSH ME LIKE IN SOME DAMN BOND MOVIE--
AMBUSH?
--WITH A STUN GUN THAT HE THANKFULLY DIDN'T HAVE THE FIRST IDEA HOW TO USE!
THEY'RE FUCKING COFFEE BEANS, PATRICK!
THEY'RE NOT FUCKING NUCLEAR FUCKING LAUNCH CODES!
THIS WHOLE THING IS ABSURD.
LET ME MAKE YOU A CUP OF COFFEE.

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK OF THIS AS SCIENCE, AND THERE'S CERTAINLY AN ELEMENT OF THAT AT WORK...
...PROPER TEMP FOR THE BEST EXTRACTION, METHOD OF GRINDING--BURR IS ALWAYS PREFERRED--RIGHT UP TO FILTRATION METHOD...
...THE LIST GOES ON AND ON...
...BUT WITH ALL OF THAT IN MIND, THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF ARTISTRY INVOLVED, OR AT LEAST I'D LIKE TO THINK SO.
ANY IDIOT CAN LEARN TO READ A TEMPERATURE GAUGE.
BUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ISSUES OF TASTE, WE ENTER THE REALM OF THE SUBJECTIVE.
WHAT'S AMAZING TO ME MAY BE ENTIRELY BORING TO YOU.
"JUST COFFEE" TO YOU MIGHT BE A TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCE TO ANOTHER.
THESE GUYS AREN'T CHASING THE SPIRITUAL, PATRICK. DO YOU GET THIS?
THREE SEPARATE PEOPLE TRIED TO USE VIOLENCE TO GET YOUR BEANS TONIGHT!
AND THAT'S ANOTHER THING. LAIDLAW TOLD ME HE KNEW WHEN THE NEXT SHIPMENT OF BEANS WAS ARRIVING.
TWICE THE HIPSTER-BARISTAS INTERCEPTED ME.
HOW DO THEY KNOW?
I MAY HAVE... MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT IT IN THE COMMUNITY.
BREET BREET
COFFEE'S READY.

YOU ARE FUCKING KIDDING ME.
YOU'RE THE LEAK?
I WOULDN'T... I WOULDN'T PUT IT LIKE THAT, I NEVER SAID WHERE OR WHEN...
...ONLY THAT MY KOPI LUWAK WAS FINALLY READY AND I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SAMPLING IT.
DID YOU GIVE THEM MY NAME, TOO?
NEVER MIND, I DON'T CARE, I DON'T WANT TO CARE.
WE'RE DONE, RIGHT? THAT'S IT?
I'LL SEND YOU MY BILL IN THE MORNING.
UHM.
ACTUALLY, THERE'S... THERE'S A LAST SAMPLE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE...
...TOMORROW.
YOU SURE YOU WON'T STAY FOR A CUP OF COFFEE?

RUSTLE
WHMP
SKRRTCH
THUNK
SCRRRAPE
KATHUNK
FUCK!
KLATTER

C'MON THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING--
WHAT.
ARE.
YOU.
DOING?
COOKING?
I HAVE A GUN IN MY HAND, FUJI.
WITH BULLETS IN IT.

OH, GIVE IT A REST, DEX.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SHOOT ME.
I DON'T KNOW, I'VE GOT A FRIEND WHO'S A COP...
...SHE'D BELIEVE ME IF I SAID I THOUGHT I WAS BEING ROBBED.
WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
I TOLD YOU, I WAS COOKING.
SO HOW WAS YOUR NIGHT?
I WAS ATTACKED BY THREE SEPARATE PEOPLE OVER COFFEE BEANS.
WHY ARE YOU GOING THROUGH MY EVERYTHING?
I TOLD YOU, I WAS--
FUJI, IF YOU SAY THE WORD "COOKING" AGAIN, I WILL SHOOT YOU, I SWEAR TO FUCKING GOD.
I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT. YOU SWEAR WAY TOO MUCH, ANSEL HEARS--
FUJI CASSANDRA.
I FIGURED YOU HAD TO HAVE SOME EMERGENCY FUNDS HIDDEN SOMEWHERE.
I WAS LOOKING FOR MONEY, OKAY?

THERE IS NO JOB, IS THERE, FUJI?
NO COMMISSIONS, NO TEACHING GIG, NOTHING LIKE THAT.
STUFF KEEPS FALLING THROUGH.
SURE.
IT DOES!
I DID THIS STUDIO GIG IN LA, AND I HAD LIKE, THREE JOBS LINED UP AFTER THAT, BUT IT ALL...
...EVAPORATED.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE.
FREE RENT, FREE ROOM, FREE BOARD.
SO YOU WERE GOING TO JUST ROB ME AND TAKE OFF?
DEPENDED ON HOW MUCH MONEY I FOUND, I GUESS.
SEE, I CAN'T TELL IF YOU'RE JOKING OR NOT, FUJI.

MAN, YOU REALLY DON'T THINK MUCH OF ME, DO YOU?
YOU'VE YET TO PROVE ME WRONG, LITTLE SISTER.
LOOK, FUJI, IT'S THREE IN THE MORNING. I'M EXHAUSTED.
JUST... JUST CLEAN THIS MESS UP AND PUT EVERYTHING AWAY AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT TOMORROW, OKAY?
WE BOTH NEED SOME SLEEP.

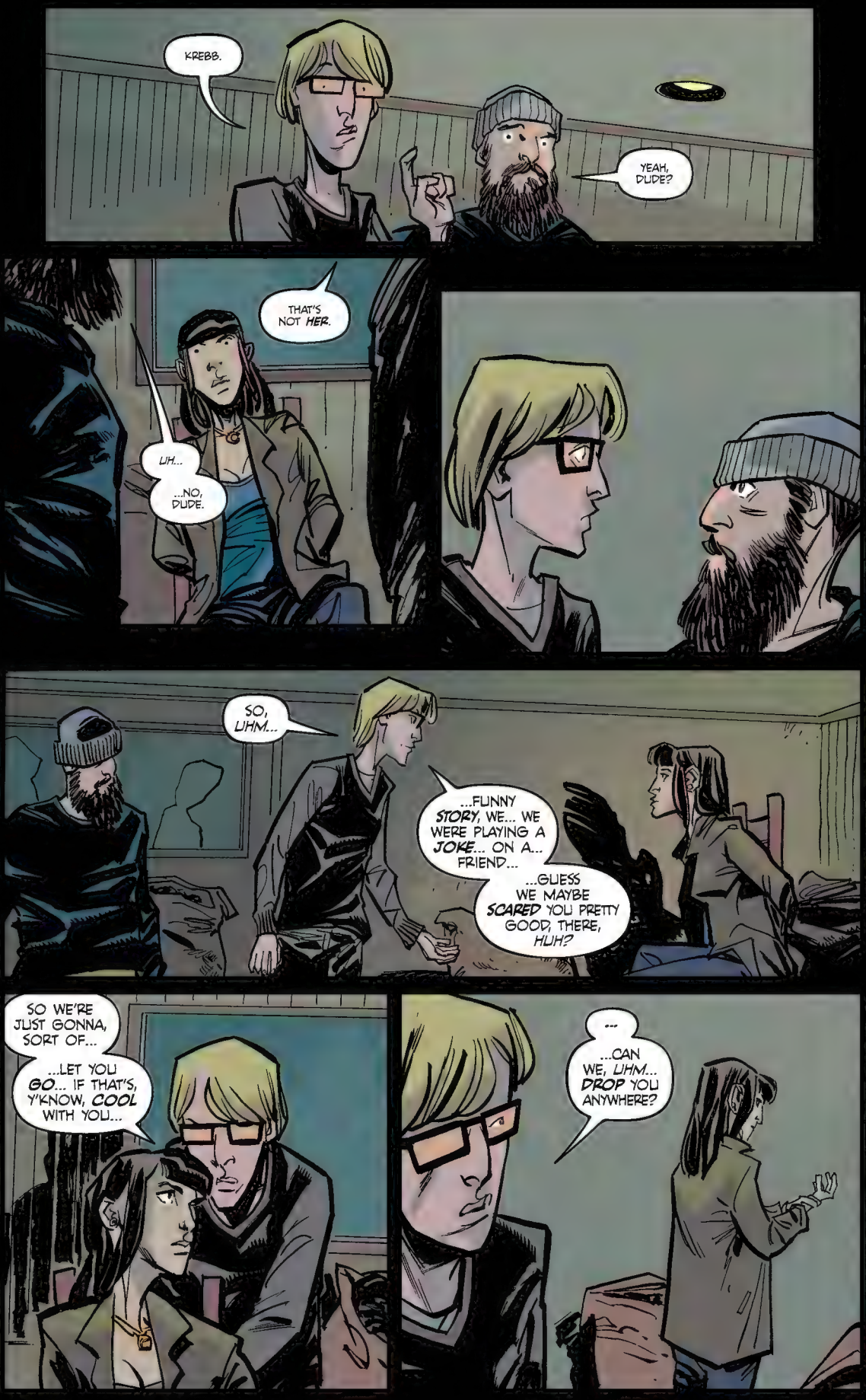
"CLEAN THIS UP."
YES, MA'AM, CAPTAIN PARIOS, MA'AM!
FUCK YOU, DEX.
FUCK. YOU.
TREATING ME LIKE I'M A CHILD...
...NOT GOING TO STAY WHERE I'M NOT WELCOME...

SHIT.

HEY, GREY. YOU BELIEVE IT? DEX KICKED ME OUT...
...NO... HUH...
GREY, CAN I SLEEP ON YOUR COUCH? DEX KINDA MADE IT CLEAR I WASN'T WELCOME...
...YEAH, BETTER, OKAY...
...HERE WE GO--
HEY--!
YOU DID THIS TO YOURSELF, PARIOS!
HOLD ONTO HER, KREBB!
DUDE! STOP KICKING!
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!
GET HER IN THE BACK, QUICK!
BET YOU DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE SMART ENOUGH TO MAKE AN EXTRA SET OF KEYS, HUH?
HELP! HELP!! SOMEONE--

HELP, DEX, HELP--
TUNK
UNNHH...
UH... DUDE?
I THINK MAYBE--
JUST HOLD ON!

WHAT A BEAN
UNNHH...
GOOD THING WE'RE NICE GUYS, PARIOS...
...NOT THE KIND WHO, SAY, TAKE YOUR CLOTHES AND LEAVE YOU LYING IN THE RAIN.
LIKE THAT.
BUT YOU HAD TO PLAY ROUGH, YOU HAD TO PUSH US...
...AND WHEN YOU PUSH THE BARISTA MAFIA--
OREGON
141 ZIP
--WE GRIND YOU ULTRA FINE!


KREBB.
YEAH, DUDE?
THAT'S NOT *HER*.
UH...
...NO, DUDE.
SO, UHM...
...FUNNY ***STORY***, WE... WE WERE PLAYING A ***JOKE***... ON A... FRIEND...
...GUESS WE MAYBE ***SCARED*** YOU PRETTY GOOD, THERE, *HUH?*
SO WE'RE JUST GONNA, SORT OF...
...LET YOU ***GO***... IF THAT'S, Y'KNOW, ***COOL*** WITH YOU...
...
...CAN WE, *UHM*... ***DROP*** YOU ANYWHERE?

LOOK, MISS, WE'RE... WE'RE REALLY SORRY...
...IT WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING, THAT'S ALL... YOU WON'T... TELL ANYONE...
WELL, THAT DEPENDS.
I SHOULD PROBABLY CALL THE COPS OR--
NO! YOU DON'T--I MEAN, THERE'S NO NEED TO--YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THAT!
I'M STILL DECIDING.
IT WOULD HELP ME DECIDE IF YOU TOLD ME MORE ABOUT THE COFFEE BEANS...

FUJI?
MORNING, ANSEL.
M-M-GOOD MORNING, DEX!
FUJI UP?
SHE'S-- MHFF--N-NOT HERE...
...TH-THINK SHE-- CRNNCH--WENT OUT--MFF.
OUT?
OH FOR FUCK'S SAKE...

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, ANSEL.
GOTTA GO TALK TO GREY.
'KAY!
WHAT'D YOU TELL HIM, FUJ?
"OH, GREY, YOU'RE SO HANDSOME AND MY SISTER'S SUCH A BITCH...
"...SHE'S SO MEAN SHE KICKED ME OUT..."
DAMMIT.
DAMMIT DAMMIT DAMM--

ZZZAAAKKKKK
I FEEL I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR YOUR ADVICE, MISS PARIOS...
NH HNNN NHHH...
...THE DEVICE IS MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN EMPLOYED AS YOU SUGGESTED.
HNN GNN HNGH...
HNN NH D-DON'TNHH...

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES NEXT MONTH...
The Case of a Cup of Joe
Part Four